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Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
SS-15 NSC-05 /059 W
----------121734 160423Z /65
R 151655Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7353

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, ES
SUBJECT: REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE "COMMITTEE AGAINST VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR"

REFS: (A) 77 STATE 261177, (B) 77 SAN SALVADOR 3845,
(C) 77 SAN SALVADOR 3767, (D) 77 SAN SALVADOR 4320,
(E) 77 SAN SALVADOR 4125

1. THE FOLLOWING EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON REPORT OF "COMMITTEE AGAINST VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR" REQUESTED IN REF. A IN THE SAME ORDER AS ALLEGATIONS IN REF (A).

A. THE EMBASSY HAS RECIEVED COPIES OF THREE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LISTS OF PERSONS ALLEGEDLY DETAINED BY THE GOES. THE ONLY ONE WITH 16 NAMES ON IT IS A DOCUMENT CALLED "BACKGROUND TO RURAL PRISONERS IN EL SALVADOR" DATED 13 SEPTEMBER 1977 (EMBASSY'S COPY WAS SENT BY D/HA). THIS IS IN TURN BASED ON A DOCUMENT OBTAINED BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FROM THE UNION DE TRABAJADORES DEL CAMPO (UTC) AND THE FEDERACION CRISTIANA DE CAMPESINOS SALVADORENOS (FECCAS) DATED 26 APRIL 1977. THE ALLEGED INCIDENTS REFERRED TO IN THE DOCUMENT APPEAR TO ALL HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE JULY 1, 1977. IT IS NOTE-WORTHY THAT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ATTACHED A NOTE TO ITS DOCU-MENT STATING: "THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT
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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S OPINION OR POSITION BUT IS REPRODUCED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES."

B. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE FIGURE OF 33 PEOPLE AS HAVING BEEN "ILLEGALLY IMPRISONED WITH THEIR PRESENT WHEREABOUTS UN-CERTAIN" MAY BE A REASONABLE ESTIMATE. THE EMBASSY QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, WHETHER OF THESE 33, 18 PERSONS HAVE BEEN

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ARRESTED SINCE JULY 1, 1977. (FOR ONE PREVIOUS EMBASSY ESTIMATE ON THIS ISSUE, SEE REF B.)

C. THE EMBASSY RECEIVED ON AUGUST 17, 1977 A COPY OF THE STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH C OF REF A. IT IS DATED MAY 15, 1977. IN CASE D/HA DOES NOT HAVE COPY, EMBASSY WILL POUCH ONE.

D. THE EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS ALLEGATION.

E. THE EMBASSY HAS ACQUIRED NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT. (SEE SAL SALVADOR 0513) POLITICAL OFFICER BROUGHT UP THE CASE IN A CONVERSATION WITH DR. JULIO GARCIA PRIETO, SUB-SECRETARY OF JUSTICE, ON JANUARY 18, 1978. GARCIA PRIETO CLAIMED TO HAVE DISCUSSED THE CASE WITH PRESIDENT ROMERO, GEN. JOSE NAPOLOEN AGREDA (ROMERO'S PRIVATE SECRETARY), AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE DR. RAFAEL FLORES Y FLORES. ALL THREE, ALONG WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE (GEN. FEDERICO CASTILLO YANES), CLAIMED TO HAVE NO INFORMATION ON ARRIETA (SEE MEMCON OF JANUARY 18, 1978 WITH GARCIA PRIETO).

F. ACCORDING TO REF C, "PRESIDENT ROMERO STATED THAT EVEN NAPOLEON DUARTE COULD RETURN." ACCORDING TO REF B, A PDC SOURCE TOLD EMBASSY IN AUGUST 1977 THAT HE BELIEVED "WELL-KNOWN PDC LEADERS SUCH AS ANTONIO MORALES EHRLICH AND COL. CLARAMOUNT COULD SAFELY RETURN. THE RETURN OF NAPOLOEN DUARTE, HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD PROBABLY RAISE SERIOUS PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT ROMERO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE WAS FREE TO RETURN." PRESIDENT ROMERO ON ONE OCCASION INDICATED HIS CONCERN OVER THIS RETURN WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN A SITUATION SIMILAR TO THE ONE NOW EIXISTING IN NICARAGUA. (I.E., CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION)

G. FOR INFORMATION ON THIS INCIDENT, SEE REFS D AND E. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL VERSION OF INCIDENT, THEY WERE CATTLE RUSTLERS WHO ATTACKED POLICE, KILLING ONE, WHILE CHURCH SAID THEY WERE LAY WORKERS INNOCENT OF ANY CRIME. ON-SITE SURVEY BY EMBASSY OFFICERS PROVIDED FURTHER VARIATIONS. EMBASSY COMMENTED THAT "CONFLICTING REPORTS INDICATE THERE MAY BE SOME ELEMENTS OF TRUTH IN BOTH GOES AND OPPOSING VERSIONS. THERE IS DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT CUSTOMS AGENT WAS KILLED FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT ACTION BY CUSTOMS POLICE WAS FORM OF REPRISAL." (REF E)

H. ACCORDING TO THE SEPTEMBER 26, 1977 EDITION OF "LA CRONICA DEL PUEBLO", ARCHBISHOP ROMERO MADE THESE STATEMENTS IN A SERMON ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1977.
DEVINE

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